

Notification of Public Records Request for Thurston County Employee Pay Data

Thurston County has received two public records requests for certain employee pay data.

On May 23, 2022 and June 8, 2022, Thurston County received two public records requests (#P017167-052322) from Alyse Messmer (amessmer@bellinghamherald.com) and (#P017393-060822) from Justin Kramer (washington@openthebooks.com).

Specifically, #P017167-052322 requested:

May 23, 2022

Pursuant to the state open records law RCW secs. 42.56.001 to 42.56.902, I write on behalf of McClatchy to request a copy of Thurston County's employee pay data for 2021. Specifically, we seek a database or databases that include employees' first and last names, position/title, department, dates of hire and separation, FTE status, base pay, overtime pay and total pay for 2020. We do not seek fields containing Social Security numbers, home addresses, withholding information, dates of birth, or phone numbers.

We would like the information in electronic form, preferably Excel or delimiter-separated value text format. We'd encourage you to email them to the address below.

As provided by the open records law, we request your response within five business days.

If you choose to deny this request, please provide a written explanation for the denial including a reference to the specific statutory exemption(s) upon which you rely. Also, please provide all segregable portions of otherwise exempt material.

If your office does not maintain these public records, please let me know who does and include the proper custodian's name and address.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need further information. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

*Alyse Messmer
The Bellingham Herald
amessmer@bellinghamherald.com*

#P017393-060822 requested:

Pursuant to the Public Records Act, this is a request for a copy of the following records: An electronic file (ie Excel, PDF, Word) of any and all employees including part-time, temporary, seasonal employees and elected officials for year of 2021 (fiscal or calendar year). Each employee record should contain the year of compensation, first name, middle initial, last name, hire date (mm-dd-yyyy), base salary amount, bonus amount, overtime amount, gross annual wages and position title.

Copies of both requests are available below.

This notice is being posted to comply with new language in the Public Records Act, RCW 42.56.250(12), which states that employers must provide notice to an employee and any union representing the employee if a request for records seeks information found exclusively in an employee payroll file. Thurston County is notifying each of the unions representing Thurston County employees by separate correspondence. Additionally, Thurston County is sending a notification to Thurston County employees by email.

Pursuant to RCW 42.56.540, a person/entity named in the record or to whom the record specifically pertains may file a lawsuit seeking to enjoin [stop] the release of any specific public record, and the Superior Court may issue an order stopping release of the record if it determines withholding the record is appropriate under the law.

To the extent the requested records exist, Thurston County intends to release to the requestors those records or portions of records which are not exempt from disclosure pursuant to the Public Records Act, chapter 42.56 RCW. Therefore, pursuant to RCW 42.56.250, the purpose of this notice is to provide notification of the pending disclosure of the above-referenced documents and to give an opportunity to seek to enjoin [stop] disclosure under RCW 42.56.540. Disclosure of these records will occur on August 5, 2022, absent our receipt of a court order enjoining [stopping] disclosure under RCW 42.56.540.

If you obtain an injunction, you must provide a copy of a signed court order enjoining release of the records to the Thurston County Public Records Unit Paralegal, Sara Meath, prior to close of business on August 4, 2022. In addition, you must ensure that all necessary parties (including the requestor) have been joined in the court case. Ms. Meath can be reached at this [email address](#), or by telephone at (360) 754-4998.